

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

EB-07 AID-05 IGA-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 OES-03 DPW-01 SR-02

ORM-01 HEW-02 AGR-05 FDRE-00 /088 W
----- 116195

P 201400Z FEB 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3198

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0238

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: AOIRG ICRC

SUBJECT: RELIEF OPERATIONS IN ERITREA

REF A. ADDIS ABABA 1988; B. ASMARA 215

1. EXCEPT FOR CURRENT EFFORTS INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC RELIEF WORKING THROUGH VICARIATO APOSTOLICO IN ASMARA IT APPEARS THAT RELIEF EFFORTS HERE FOUNDERING. CONCERN NOW IS FOR IMPLICATIONS EVOLVING SITUATION.

2. IT UNFORTUNATE THAT ETHIOPIAN RED CROSS (ERC) BROUGHT INTO PICTURE BY EMBASSY IN ADDIS (REF A) IN ADDITION TO ICRC, AS REQUESTED BY CONGEN (REF B). RESULT HAS BEEN IRATE CALL BY ADDIS ERC REP TO ASMARA ERC, IN PERSON DR. GHERMAI BERHE, DIR GEN PUBLIC HEALTH, ERITREA, WHO HAD PREPARED LIST OF NEEDED SUPPLIES (REF B), TAKING HIM TO TASK FOR REQUESTING SUPPLIES THROUGH AMERICAN EMBASSY. ASMARA GROUP CONCERNED CITIZENS WHO HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH VICARIATO APOSTOLICO UNDER RUBRIC ERC HAVE NOW DECIDED DROP LATTER DESIGNATION AND PROCEED AS PRIVATE CITIZENS. THEY CONVINCED ERC TOTALLY UNWILLING TO HELP ERITREA OR ERITREANS AND CITE REFUSAL ERC RESPOND TO PREVIOUS REQUEST TO PROVIDE WHEREWITHAL TO ASSIST UP TO 150,000

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PEOPLE. LIST PROVIDED US (REF B) WAS PART THAT EARLIER LIST.

APPEARS ERC NOW SEEN DY ERITREANS AS MERELY ANOTHER PART OF
OPPRESSIVE AMHARA REGIME. THEY REGARD ERC SURVEY TEAM (PARA 3,
REF A) AS CYNICAL GESTURE TO OUTSIDE WORLD. THERE NOW NO OPERATIVE
ASMARA BRANCH OF ERC.

3. BELIEVE IT NECESSARY THAT, BEFORE LONG, USG BE SEEN TO BE
HELPING NEED ERITREAN POPULATION. THEREFORE, AS RED CROSS ROUTE
FOR RELIEF ASSISTANCE, WHETHER NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL, SEEMS
BLOCKED, SUGGEST EMBASSY AND DEPT GIVE THOUGHT TO UTILIZING
PRIVATE U.S. WELFARE ORGAINZATION SUCH AS CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES,
AND OTHERS, ACTIVE EARLIER IN NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR AS CHANNELS FOR
US RELIEF SUPPLIES. SUGGEST AS FIRST STEP THAT EMB ADDIS DISCUSS
ERITREAN RELIEF PROBLEM WITH REV. KEVIN DOHENY, CATHOLIC
SECRETARIAT, PO BOX 2454, ADDIS ABABA, TEL 158415.

4. WE WILL MEANWHILE TRY KEEP TABS ON ICRC WHEAT SHIPMENT
ALLEGEDLY DESTINED FOR ASMARA (PARA 5, REF A) AND DETERMINE WHAT
DISPOSTION MADE OF IT. SUSPICION HERE IS THAT ALL SUCH SHIPMENTS
WILL BE SEIZED BY ARMY FOR ITS OWN USE.
SHERRY

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